

The Determinants of Health-Seeking Behavior in a Nairobi Slum, Kenya

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Abstract

Although studies have previously been done in Kenya on health care demand, it has hitherto not been clear how health seeking behavior due to illness is affected by information on health care quality and by quality variation conditional on this information. Moreover, despite in-depth studies on health seeking behavior in Kenyan rural areas, similar studies in urban areas are missing. There are no econometric studies on health care demand in slums in Kenya. This study develops and tests the hypothesis that the information available about service quality in a health facility affects demand for health care. The key finding is that service quality, information about this quality, wealth, user fees, and gender, are the main determinants of patients' choice among alternative medical treatments. A policy geared towards improving health information among the slum households is encouraged.